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PRESS INFORMATION

Midcounties Co-op retains Phone Co-op for fourth year

The Midcounties Co-operative, the UK's second largest independent co-operative, has renewed its contract with The Phone Co-op for the fourth consecutive year as its primary telecommunications supplier.

The Phone Co-op provides line rental, outbound calls and non-geographic numbers for the society's food stores, travel agencies, childcare sites, pharmacies, funeral homes, motor showrooms, post offices, newsagents and offices.

In total The Phone Co-op supplies services to some 8,000 staff working at 450 sites across Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, the West Midlands and surrounding counties.

The Phone Co-op was originally chosen in 2006 following a detailed assessment of the market including cost comparisons between several potential suppliers.

Guy Ohlenschlager of The Phone Co-op commented, "This long-term relationship is based on us always being able to offer competitive rates together with a very high level of individual account management and support. A dedicated account management team provides Midcounties staff with daily updates and has helped them manage the development and expansion of the network, which has grown significantly over the past three years.

"Within the first year of the contract, we managed the consolidation of the Midcounties and West Midlands Co-operatives' networks when the two societies merged. Since then, we have supported the integration of several newly acquired businesses, such as Star Newsagents and Somerfield stores."

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Midcounties Co-operative is the UK's second largest independent co-operative society with annual gross sales of £748 million. The society trades in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire and the West Midlands. For further information, visit www.midcounties.coop

The Phone Co-op is the UK's only telecommunications co-operative, procuring telecommunications services on behalf of its customers, many of whom are co-operatives, charities and other not-for-profit organisations. The Phone Co-op's service has been taken up by over 15,000 customers, including Midcounties, Channel Islands, Southern, East of England, and Radstock Co-operative Societies, Suma Wholefoods, Christian Aid, Amnesty International, Triodos Bank, the Centre for Alternative Technology,

Manchester City Council and Unison. As a co-operative owned by its customer members, The Phone Co-op distributes any profits which are not re-invested back to members via a dividend based on each member's spend and through a loan fund which supports other co-operatives. For more information, visit www.thephone.coop

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